

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6439

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 0534

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, PFOR, RO

SUBJ: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER: EMIGRATION

REF: STATE 019586

1. DURING CALL ON FONMIN MACOVESCU JANUARY 29 AMBASSADOR RAISED ANEW OUR GROWING CONCERN WITH ERRATIC PACE OF EMIGRATION SINCE OCTOBER. DRAWING ON POINTS CONTAINED IN REFTEL (SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING PARA D ON PUBLIC ANTI-EMIGRATION CAMPAIGN), AMBASSADOR SAID THERE IS DEVELOPING SENSE OF UNEASINESS IN BOTH EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OVER RECENT ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE. HE POINTED OUT THAT IRONICALLY AFTER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS OF SUSTAINED ACTIVITY THE DECREASED LEVEL OF DEPARTURES DURING THE NOV-DEC PERIOD SEEMED TO BE BRINGING US BACK TO THE SITUATION WE WERE FACING EXACTLY ONE YEAR AGO. THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS IF SUCH A SITUATION WERE TO CONTINUE.

2. MACOVESCU, WHO HAD RETURNED THE NIGHT BEFORE FROM AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO AUSTRIA AND OBVIOUSLY HAD NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE FOR THE MEETING, IMMEDIATELY ADMITTED THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY RECENT SHARP CHANGES IN NUMBERS OF PEOPLE DEPARTING. HE SAID THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT

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GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY HAD A RIGHT TO ADDRESS ITS OWN CITIZENS

ON MATTERS SUCH AS EMIGRATION AS IT SAW FIT. AT THE SAME TIME HE SAID HE HOPED NO ONE IN WASHINGTON WAS IN ANY DOUBT OVER WHETHER ROMANIA WOULD LIVE UP TO ITS COMMITMENTS, VERBAL AND WRITTEN, RELATING TO THE SOLUTION OF HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS. GOR POLICY HAD NOT CHANGED AND WOULD NOT CHANGE IN THIS REGARD. BUT IN SAYING THIS HE HOPED WE UNDERSTOOD, AND IN PARTICULAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, THAT THIS POLICY HAD ITS COMPLICATIONS. HE CITED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS A NEW FACTOR THE GROWING NUMBER OF PROBLEMS RELATING TO ROMANIAN JEWS WHO HAD EMIGRATED TO ISRAEL AND NOW WANTED TO RETURN TO ROMANIA.

3. THE MINISTER SAID HE FULLY COMPREHENDED THE IMPORT OF THE AMBASSADOR PRESENTATION AND WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT IN GREATER DETAIL AFTER THE AMBASSADOR'S RETURN FROM MOSCOW AND AFTER HE HAD TIME TO BRIEF HIMSELF ON THE SITUATION. IT WAS AGREED THAT BOTH WOULD MEET AGAIN EITHER BETWEEN FEBRUARY 6-11 PRIOR TO HIS OWN DEPARTURE FOR HOLLAND, OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS RETURN FEBRUARY 14. BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE NEXT SUBJECT, AT THE AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST HE INSTRUCTED DOBROIU TO BE SURE TO OBTAIN PRIOR TO THE NEXT CONVERSATION ALL PERTINENT STATISTICS AND INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE MARRIAGE APPROVAL SITUATION AS WELL.

4. COMMENT. ACCEPTING THE FACT THERE ARE A VARIETY OF BUILT-IN IMPEDIMENTS TO THE SYSTEM WHICH TEND TO INDUCE AN ERRATIC STATISTICAL RECORD ESPECIALLY WHEN LOOKED AT OVER A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, WE OURSELVES ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO REASONS FOR RECENT ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE. CERTAINLY LITTLE OR NO BUREAUCRATIC ACTIVITY CONNECTED WITH EMIGRATION TOOK PLACE FROM MID-DECEMBER THROUGH FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY DUE TO FRANTIC EFFORTS THROUGHOUT GOR TO CLOSE BOOKS NOT ONLY ON END OF YEAR BUT ON FIVE-YEAR PLAN AS WELL. WE ARE SOMEWHAT HEARTENED, HOWEVER, BY FACT THAT THROUGH JANUARY 29 WE HAD ISSUED 61 IMMIGRANT VISAS. FORTY OF THESE HAVE BEEN ISSUED IN PAST TEN DAYS. WE WILL AGAIN DISCUSS SITUATION WITH AMBASSADOR COHEN PRIOR TO NEXT MACOVESCU CONVERSATION TO ASCERTAIN HIS SENSE OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.

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